

MEMORIES OF CALVARY

AN EASTER SKETCH.



COMPOSED BY
OLIVIA WARD BUSH

BOSTON, MASS.

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PREFACE

It is the writer's strong conviction that more and more the need for strong faith in Christ, as the Redeemer of men, impresses itself upon those who seek not only for Spiritual Truth, but for Spiritual Peace as well.

The many doctrines of the present day, the rapid advance of materialism all tend to detract from rather than add to spiritual strength, and the writer believes that the recognition of Christ, as the Highest Ideal is imperative and absolutely needful for man's best development.

OLIVIA WARD BUSH.

Olivia W. Bush

CHARACTERS

NIGHT (personified)—a young woman wearing a long black robe, trimmed with stars.

ANXIOUS SEEKER—(a young woman who seeks to know the truth of Calvary's Cross, wearing first black, then white).

MALE QUARTETTE (invisible).

HERALDS OF THE CROSS—(15 or 20 young men and young women, who herald the Easter morn; white robes are preferred).

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MEMORIES OF CALVARY

SCENE I

Night on Calvary

Tall palms may be used on platform arranged to suggest a grove—lights are turned off or dimly seen. In the distance, on an elevation, is seen a wooden Cross, at the base of which kneels or sits the Anxious Seeker, robed in black.

Night appears robed in black and silver stars. Night soliloquizes, comforts Anxious Seeker, then departs. Anxious Seeker soon follows.

Before curtain rises invisible male quartette sings the familiar hymn, "**Peace, Perfect Peace.**"

Voice of Night (Soliloquizes). "Day has long since departed, over the sleeping earth, silence has fallen and the restless heart of man beats calm again in these, his slumbering hours, while there on Calvary's Hill stands out the cross and though Earth's shadows cast their endless lengths over all the vast expanse of the Creator's earth, they cannot hide from view this sacred emblem of man's imperishable immortal inheritance, they cannot dim the greatness of its glory.

But as for man, he sleeps, for he is a weary, poor,

restless man, ever weary, yet ever striving, seeking always, yet still unsatisfied. He has traversed the earth from shore to shore, laying low the mighty forests in his pathway, holding back the onward course of rushing waters, awearied, yes, but relentless in his search for greater triumphs.

Deep down into the heart of Mother-Earth he has forged his way and brought up priceless gems from Nature's richest mines. Down into the almost unfathomable depths of mighty oceans he has laid his cable lengths, bringing near the distant lands, enabling man to send with speed a message to his far off brother man. He has hewn his way through mighty rocks of unnumbered ages. He has scaled the mountain even to its highest peak and builded there his magnificent palaces of home. Awearied? Yes, but not content, he needs must try the unknown regions up and beyond the floating clouds, and out of the mighty power of his mental concept, he has wrought the wonder of the centuries—the chariots of the air—by which men fly at will to heights such as man ne'er before conceived of.

But man's soul is not at rest, for, over and beyond his great achievements, stands out the Cross of Christ, the mortal and immortal Emblem of man's highest need and strongest hope.

O Calvary! Calvary! in thee, and thee alone shall man find peace and rest. (Discovers Anxious Seeker at the foot of Cross).

But who is this in mournful guise beneath the Shadow of the Cross? Speak Mortal! Why art thou here in this, the gloom and darkness of Earth's silent hour? The Voice of Night now bids thee speak! What seekest thou?

Anxious Seeker.—O Voice of Night, I seek to know the meaning of this Cross; my soul is weighted down with longing for the higher way of life, and I did feel that, somehow here, beneath this Cross, my soul might find release, and I must here abide until the morning breaks. Dost thou know the meaning of this Cross?

Voice of Night.—O Anxious Seeker, 'tis the Cross of Christ, and beneath it is the Mount of Calvary. Have you not heard the wondrous story of Him, who suffered there and died?

Anxious Seeker.—Ah! Yes the story has been told, yet I, alas! but darkly can discern its meaning. O, tell me aught you know of Calvary's Christ.

Voice of Night.—O Anxious Seeker, in the days when man first felt the need of Life and help Divine, I looked from out my home, amid the shining stars, and I beheld on Calvary's Hill the Cross, where hung the Crucified, who gave His Life a ransom for man's sin. I saw the veil of the Mighty Temple rent in twain, I heard His agonizing cry. It is finished! It is finished! I heard the cry of

mortals in their terror and their fears. But once again I looked, and Lo! the Cross was bare. The Christ had filled His mighty purpose. Through the vaulted heavens above my starry home I heard Angelic hosts proclaim: The Christ has risen! Behold! man's fettered soul is now redeemed forevermore. O, Anxious Seeker, have but faith and thou shalt truly find the Prince of Peace. And now, the morning breaks! Farewell, and when we meet again, may you have changed your robe of gloom for one of spotless white. Farewell! Farewell!

(Night disappears and lights are turned on gradually.)

Anxious Seeker.—The Prince of Peace! Ah! now the light comes in; I feel His Kingly Presence in my soul! The Cross stands out in all its brightness now, and from the distance comes the sound of heavenly music, as if 'twere borne on Angel's wings. (Listens).

Invisible Male Quartette sings the familiar hymn.

Jesus calls us o'er the tumult
Of our Life's wild, restless sea,
Day by day His sweet voice soundeth,
Saying Christian, follow Me!

Jesus calls us, by Thy mercies,
Saviour, may we hear Thy call,
Give our hearts to Thy obedience,
Serve and love Thee best of all!

Anxious Seeker.—Ah! how sweetly strange this music seems, as if in answer to my soul's desire. I will arise, I will put off this robe of gloom for one of spotless white to greet the Easter Dawn.

(Anxious Seeker departs and lights are turned on in full)

SCÈNE II

Easter Morning

Lights are turned on full. Heralds of the Cross enter bearing flowers to cast at the foot of Cross. They sing, Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God Almighty. Enter Anxious Seeker (robed in white). She joins them in praise. They depart together singing, All hail the power of Jesus' Name.

(Enter 15 or 20 young men and women, "Heralds of the Cross," robed in white; they approach the Cross and scatter flowers at its base, singing Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God Almighty. They continue to sing until the Anxious Seeker returns and lays her flowers at the base of Cross. Then rising, she turns to the singers.)

Anxious Seeker.—O glad young voices, heralding this blessed morn, I, too, would seek to praise the Prince of Peace, for He has passed my way, and from His storehouse rich with love, has showered blessings on my waiting soul.

O listen, while I give to you the wondrous message of His love. (Recites the following verses):

Anxious Seeker.—

Stealing over my heart with such sweetness,

Came the words so divinely true:

“I will open the windows of Heaven,

And pour rich blessings on you.”

He did open the windows of Heaven,

And oh, such a blessing He poured;

My Father, so rich in His mercies,

My Saviour, my King, and my Lord.

I had asked Him in pitiful weakness,

To lead me, in this, my way;

It was night, in my soul, as I pleaded,

But He led me to perfect day.

Out into the broad green pastures,

Of which I had little dreamed;

Out into the bright clear sunshine,

Where the rays of His Glory gleamed.

Ah, the blessing was more than He promised,

For it seemed I could scarcely contain

The wonderful flow of His mercies

I could only whisper His name.

And praise Him for what He had given,

His promise so sweet and true,

“I will open the windows of Heaven

And pour rich blessings on you.”

Heralds of the Cross reply:

We do rejoice with Thee

In this, Thy new-found peace,

Come blend your voice with ours
In highest praise.

All retire from stage, headed by Anxious Seeker; singing "All hail the power of Jesus' Name." They sing until their voices sound as if in the distance. Curtain falls.

Note—One of the following Easter poems might be used between the two scenes and one might be used at conclusion of Memories of Calvary.



THE CRUCIFIED.

Night's Shadows wrapped the Cross in gloom,
 And e'en the shining stars grew dim with grief;
 All Nature bowed in agony,
 And yearned in silent anguish for relief.
 The Temple's Veil was rent in twain,
 The dead, though sleeping through the quiet years,
 Arose, and walked the troubled Earth
 While living souls grew faint with many fears.
 What can this mighty tumult mean?
 The Christ, the suffering Saviour now has died!
 Ask not, but gaze on yonder Mount
 Of Calvary, where hangs the Crucified!

OLIVIA WARD BUSH.

AN EASTER ECHO.

Easter dawned, but I was weary
 With the fever and the pain,
 And my soul within seemed sinking,
 Never to revive again.

This affliction pressed me sorely,
 "Oh, if Fate would just be kind
 And relieve my tortured being,
 That my soul might be resigned."

"O, that peace would follow conflict,
 O, that grief would turn to joy,
 O, that suffering might conquer
 Where it threatens to destroy."

"Ah! if I could catch a vision
 Of the risen Christ today,
 I am sure my faith would strengthen,
 And all doubt would pass away."

Thus with self I lay communing,
 Tossing, restless, in my pain,
 When, within my room came stealing
 Softly breathing, this sweet strain—

Sung by little children's voices,
 Heralding our Easter day;
 Ringing through my open window
 From God's Temple o'er the way.

"He is Risen! He is Risen!
 Wipe away your falling tear,
 Pain and grief and doubt are vanquished,
 For the Lord Christ draweth near."

Hushed at once was my complaining,
 And my earthly sight grew dim,
 For my soul had caught a vision,
 And rejoicing, cried to Him,—

Who today arose in triumph,
 "O, Thou Conqueror of strife,
 I accept Thy heaven-sent message,
 Let it echo through my life,—

Till it overrules all weakness,
 Till it crushes doubt and fear,
 Till I say in Death, victorious,
 He, the Lord Christ draweth near.

Years have passed and still the echo
 Lingers with assuring ring,
 E'en in pain or sore affliction,
 Children's voices seem to sing:

"He is risen! He is risen!
 Wipe away your falling tear,
 Pain and grief and doubt are vanquished,
 For the Lord Christ draweth near."

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AND I, IF I BE LIFTED UP.

He giveth songs way in the night,
 He listens when His children pray;
 He makes it bright as noontide light,
 He turneth darkness into day.
 I heard His voice at midnight hour,
 It came so sweet and tenderly;
 And I, if I be lifted up,
 Will surely draw all men to Me.

And I beheld Him on the Cross,
 Uplifted for my guilt and sin;
 Uplifted there in love divine
 That He might draw all men to Him.
 And I beheld Him once again,
 Uplifted as the Father's Son,
 Uplifted in the realms above,
 A King upon a Kingly throne.

I fancied Heaven's pearly gates,
 Swung wide that I might enter in;
 I fancied Heaven's arches rang,
 With praise for victory over sin.
 And I beheld a white-robed host,
 Low at His feet, adoring fall,
 I heard their grand triumphant song,
 He is our King, the Lord of all.

'Twas but His voice at midnight hour,
 Which came so sweet and tenderly;
 And I, if I be lifted up,
 Will surely draw all men to me.
 He gave me songs way in the night,
 I felt His joy and peace within,
 He led toward Heaven my fancy's flight,
 That He might draw me close to Him.

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FOR THEE.

(An Easter Poem)

And from His hands and from His side,
 Flowed down great drops of blood;
 For you, for me, for everyone,
 Streamed out that crimson flood.
 Take thou this comfort to thine heart,
 Poor wounded, stricken soul,
 That He who chastens thee with love,
 Thy weakness will control.

If bitter is the cup you taste,
 In dark Gethsemane;
 Remember that He tasted first
 That bitter cup for thee.
 He'll move thy obstacle of sin,
 He'll set thy spirit free,
 He proved His endless boundless love,
 On rugged Calvary.

Ah, trembling One, He did it all,
 Because He loved thee so;
 Then cast on Him this care of thine,
 O, trust in Him, and know:
 That from His hands and from His side,
 Flowed down great drops of blood,
 For you, for me, for everyone,
 Streamed out that crimson flood.

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WHY WEEPEST THOU?

(Easter Poem)

"Why weepest thou here?" said the Master,
 And whom dost thou seek today?
 And Mary replied in her sorrow:
 "They have taken my Lord away.

And I know not where they have laid Him,
 Though I've watched since the early morn;
 I would **take Him away** could I find Him,
 Oh, Sir! to whence was He borne."

And the Master with love overflowing,
 Said Mary, in accents so sweet,
 That she knew her dear Master had spoken,
 And with joy she fell at His feet;
 Wiped away were the tears of her sorrow,
 Her waiting had not been in vain,
 In her soul rang the Angel's glad message:
 He arose, and He liveth again!

Why weepst thou here, waiting Christian,
 Know ye not that He's risen today?
 That the confines of earth could not hold Him,
 And the stone has been rolled away?
 Have you waited and watched since the morning?
 Then your waiting has not been in vain,
 List the voice of His Angel proclaiming,
 He arose, and He liveth again!

Why weepst thou too, trembling sinner,
 Know ye not of His power to save?
For thy sake over death He has triumphed
 For thy sake He arose from the grave.
 Wipe away then the tears of thy sorrow,
 For your longings have not been in vain,
 For thee is the Angel's glad message,
 He arose, and He liveth again!

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